

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated December 15, 2006, claims 1-4 and 6-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hume 1,927,265 in view of Brandt 1,900,039. Claims 10-18, 20-28 and 30-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hume in view of Paczkowski 6,315,159. For the reasons outlined in detail below, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are in condition for allowance over the art of record.

Independent Claim 1 and Dependent Claims 2-4 and 6-9

As to claims 1-4 and 6-9, it was stated the Hume discloses a coin housing, including a coin separation member 7 having apertures 8. The coin sorting member 4, having apertures 23-27, is provided on which the coin separation member rotates. It was stated in the Office Action that a metering tray 29 is provided in Hume. On page 3 of the Office Action, it was noted that Hume does not expressly disclose but Brandt discloses a tray/chute 16 and 29 that is integral with a hopper A illustrated in Figure 5. It was then asserted that at the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to design Hume's tray/chute 29 to be integral with the hopper 28 as taught by Brandt, for the purpose of insuring that coins do not bounce out of the tray. It was noted that one of ordinary skill in the art would have found this to be a logical step given Brandt's teaching/suggestion for making the tray integral with the hopper. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites a coin bank comprising, among other elements, a metering tray which includes a wall having a channel for receiving a portion of a hopper. More particularly, with reference to Figure 14, a downwardly opening channel 294 is provided on the metering tray 216 (Figure 9) so as to engage a portion of a wall surface of the hopper 204. This relationship can also be seen, e.g., in Figure 18. As noted in the instant specification, the metering tray second end wall 286 can be defined as a downwardly opening channel that is seated on a portion of the outer wall 212 of the

hopper 204 as best shown in Figure 20 (see page 18, lines 30-34). No such structure is shown in even the applied combination of Hume and Brandt.

As is evident from the figures, the metering tray 212 is spaced from the coin separating member 202 in order to allow coins to drop onto the coin separating member but in a regulated or limited manner. More particularly, the metering tray meters, regulates or limits the speed with which coins are delivered to a coin sorting and separating assembly (see the instant specification, page 20, lines 23-32). To this end, the metering tray is suspended above the coin separating member 202 by being mounted to the hopper 204 on the one side and being supported by a foot 300 on the other end, as is evident from Figure 18.

Because there is no teaching or disclosure in even the applied combination of Hume and Brandt of the subject matter recited in pending claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is in condition for allowance over Hume in view of Brandt, as well as the remainder of the cited art.

Dependent claims 2-4 and 6-9 merely further patentably define the detailed subject matter of their parent claim or each other. As such, these claims are also believed to be in condition for allowance over the art of record.

Independent Claim 10 and its Dependent Claims 11, 12 and 14-17

Independent claim 10 and dependent claims 11-18 were rejected as being unpatentable over Hume in view of Paczkowski. Hume was said to disclose a coin housing, including a coin separation member 7 having apertures 8 mounted on a coin sorting member 4 having apertures 23-27. A metering tray 29 was also noted. Hume was admitted to not disclose a tray/chute including a floor or ramp and blocking walls. Paczkowski was said to disclose a tray/chute having a floor 60, a ramp 74, 74' and blocking walls 76, 76'. It was then asserted that at the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate a blocking wall and ramp into Hume's tray/chute 29 as taught by Paczkowski for the purpose of deflecting coins toward the opening. Paczkowski, column 4, lines 35-52, was noted in this regard. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 10 recites a coin bank comprising a housing, a coin separating member, a coin sorting member, a coin slide and a tray mounted to the housing above the coin separating member. The tray includes a plurality of walls and an opening which limits the number of associated coins passing from the tray to the coin separating member, wherein the tray is spaced from the coin separating member and includes a front wall and an elongated slot, located between the opening and the front wall, so that the associated coins can drop onto the coin separating member in a random orientation. The plurality of walls includes a floor and a ramp which extends along a length of the floor and is oriented at an acute angle in relation to the floor.

In contrast, the applied Hume reference teaches a chute 29 having a lower end formed in a depending circular guide 31 which can be seen from, e.g., Figure 5. The guide 31 closely surrounds the upper end of a tubular coin receiver 32 which rests on the delivery plate 7 and is supported by a transverse control bar 33. See Hume, page 2, lines 14-18. Moreover, the forward side of receiver 32 at its bottom is beveled forming a guide 35 (see page 2, lines 33-34). In other words, a stack of coins is formed in Hume, via the cooperation of the chute circular guide 31 and the tubular coin receiver 32. Thus, the Hume reference does not show a tray which includes an elongated slot located between the opening and a front wall, so that the associated coins can drop onto the coin separating member in a random orientation as is recited in claim 10. Such random orientation is desirable so that the coins can more easily pass onto the coin separating member and be moved thereby over the at least one coin sorting aperture of the coin sorting member.

In Hume, the presence of the tubular coin receiver 32 and its cooperation with the depending circular guide 31 which is attached to the chute 29, prevents coins from falling onto the delivery plate 7 in anything other than a stacked condition. In other words, the coins will necessarily be oriented parallel to the plane of the Hume separator plate or separation member 7. Paczkowski, of course, does not pertain to coin sorters at all, but deals with a bottle vending machine.

It should also be recognized from Figure 12 of the instant application that in one embodiment, the opening 284 is so oriented as to allow coins to slide in relation to the

separating member. In other words, the opening 284 and the elongated slot (unnumbered) are not disposed at the 6 o'clock position but, rather, at approximately the 8 o'clock position. Thus, the opening 284 is not located at the lowest point of the coin separating member 202 as it rotates. In this way, a certain limited number of coins can fall onto the separating member. These coins will make their way into one of the coin receiving apertures in the separating member and be advanced over the at least one coin sorting aperture of the coin sorting member, as is evident from a review of the instant specification.

In contrast, the Hume reference discloses a design in which a stack of coins is delivered to the 6 o'clock position of a coin sorter via chute 29, depending circular guide 31 and tubular coin receiver 32 as is evident from, e.g., Figure 5. Thus, Hume, or the combination of Hume and Paczkowski, does not teach or disclose a tray which is spaced from a coin separating member and includes an elongated slot located between a wall and the aperture so that the associated coins can drop onto the coin separating member in a random orientation. In sum, there is a clear structural difference between the subject matter recited in claim 10 and the asserted combination of references to Hume and Paczkowski. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 10 patentably defines over the applied combination of references, as well as the remainder of the cited art.

Dependent claims 11, 12 and 14-17 merely further patentably define the detailed subject matter of their parent claim or each other. As such, these claims are also believed to be in condition for allowance over the art of record.

Independent Claim 18

Independent claim 18 and its dependent claims 20-22 were rejected as being unpatentable over the combination of Hume and Paczkowski.

Independent claim 18 now recites a coin bank comprising a coin sorting assembly and a metering tray, wherein the metering tray comprises a plurality of walls defining an opening, including first and second side walls, a floor, and an end wall. The plurality of walls also defines an elongated slot located adjacent the opening. The tray

is spaced from the coin sorting assembly and allows the associated coins to drop onto the coin sorting assembly. As noted previously with regard to claim 10, Hume discloses a coin sorting machine in which a stack of coins is supplied to a delivery plate 7 via chute 29, depending circular guide 31 and tubular coin receiver 32. This is in contrast with the claimed invention.

As noted, one embodiment of the claimed invention is illustrated in, e.g., the drawings shown in Figures 12-20. Figure 18 clearly illustrates the fact that coins are allowed to slide or roll down floor 276 and drop onto the coin separator plate 202 in any orientation in which the floor 276 receives them. Therefore, the coins are not going to be stacked as in Hume but, rather, can be supplied in any desired orientation.

Thus, Hume, or Hume in combination with Paczkowski, neither teaches nor discloses a metering tray comprising an elongated slot located adjacent an opening wherein the tray is spaced from the sorting assembly and the elongated slot allows the associated coins to drop onto the coin sorting assembly.

In the applied art, Hume merely teaches the feeding of stacked coins to a delivery plate 7 via depending circular guide 31 and tubular coin receiver 32. Paczkowski does not supply those teachings which are clearly absent from Hume.

As a result, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 18 patentably defines over the applied combination of references, as well as the remainder of the cited art.

Independent Claim 23 and Dependent Claims 24-28 and 30-35

Claim 23 recites a coin bank comprising a coin sorting assembly and a metering tray wherein the metering tray comprises a first side wall, a second side wall, a first end wall, a floor, an aperture defined in the floor, an elongated slot defined between the floor and a second end wall with the aperture communicating with the slot, wherein the slot has a width larger than a width of the aperture. The subject matter recited in claim 23 can be seen in, e.g., Figures 15 and 16 of the instant application. Due to the presence of the blocking wall 282, the width of the aperture or opening 284 is smaller than the width of the elongated slot defined between the floor 276 and the second end wall 286.

While the opening 284 accommodates the largest coin meant to be sorted, the elongated slot is wider yet. This structure is beneficial in order to allow coins to drop from the metering tray 204 onto the separating member 202 in a number of orientations.

In contrast, in Hume, the presence of the tubular coin receiver 32 and its cooperation with the depending circular guide 31 attached to the chute 29 prevents coins from falling onto the delivery plate 7 in anything other than a stacked condition. As a result, there is a clear structural difference between the recitation of claim 23 and the disclosure in Hume or the combination of Hume with Paczkowski and/or Brandt. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 23 patentably defines over the applied art, as well as the remainder of the cited references.

Dependent claims 24-28 and 30-35 merely further patentably define the detailed subject matter of their parent claim or each other. As such, these claims are also believed to be in condition for allowance over all of the art of record.

However, it is noted that claim 26 has been amended as has claim 32.

Independent Claim 36 and Dependent Claims 20-22

Claim 36 was rejected on the same grounds, as were independent claims 10, 18 and 23. However, claim 36 recites a separating wheel including at least one coin receiving opening and a toroidal flange extending away from a face of the separating wheel. The toroidal flange is located radially outwardly from the at least one coin receiving aperture. No such toroidal flange is shown in either Hume or Paczkowski. It was stated in the Office Action that Hume shows a toroidal flange formed by the gear wheel 13. However, the gear wheel is located radially inwardly of the at least one coin receiving aperture or opening 8 on the delivery plate 7 of Hume. This is in contrast with the claimed invention which recites that the toroidal flange is located radially outwardly from the at least one coin receiving aperture. It can be seen from, e.g., Figure 2 that the flange 84 is disposed radially outwardly of the plurality of spaced coin receiving apertures 82 located in the coin separating wheel 62. The flange is beneficial in preventing coins from sliding radially away outwardly from the coin receiving openings or apertures 82. Accordingly, it is believed that claim 36 is also in condition for

allowance over the applied combination of references, as well as the remainder of the art of record.

Dependent claims 20-22 which merely further patentably define the detailed subject matter of claim 36 are also believed to be in condition for allowance over the art of record.


In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all of the currently pending claims are in condition for allowance over the cited art. Such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

FAY SHARPE LLP

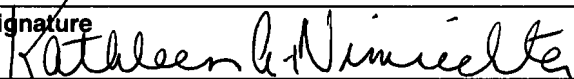
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Date


Jay F. Moldovanyi, Reg. No. 29,678
1100 Superior Avenue, Seventh Floor
Cleveland, OH 44114-2579
216-861-5582

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